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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2759

April 5, 1996

SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF FARM BILL -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman pledged that the U.S. Department of Agriculture would work quickly to implement the farm bill passed by Congress last week and signed April 4 by President Clinton. "Now that the farm bill is law, the next critical round of work begins -- implementation," Glickman said. "Congress left us in a very tight time crunch. Producers have been patiently waiting for information about how these new programs will work." Glickman said, "I pledge that this department will do everything in its power to disseminate information to the public as quickly as possible." Dates for the one-time sign-up for the seven-year market transition program will be announced within two weeks, and all program details will be available at that time. "I remain concerned that this legislation fails to provide an adequate safety net for family farmers," Glickman said. "While we implement the new farm bill we also will continue to seek innovative ways to improve the farm safety net and help producers manage risk." **Contact:** Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.

AGRICULTURAL TRADE UPDATE -- U.S. agricultural exports for January totaled a record \$5.5 billion, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report (April 2). Exports rose 3 percent compared with December 1995 and were 24 percent higher than January 1995. Imports rose 13 percent over December to \$2.7 billion, but were only 7 percent higher than a year earlier. The agricultural trade surplus was \$2.8 billion, second only to December 1995's record of nearly \$3 billion. Accumulated exports for October 1995-January 1996 totaled \$21.2 billion, 15 percent higher than the same period of fiscal 1995. In fiscal 1996, bulk exports, especially wheat, corn, soybeans and cotton, were up 30 percent compared with 1995. Year-to-date bulk export volume was only up 3 percent at 46 million tons. Tight global grain and soybean stocks continued to push commodity prices higher, driving export value upwards. Beef, pork, poultry meat, and fruit and nut exports continued to advance, boosting high-value product (HVP) exports. However, a 22-percent decline in fresh vegetable exports offset some of the HVP gains. **Contact:** Joel Greene (202) 219-0816.

STEPS TO KEEP U.S. FREE OF "MAD COW" DISEASE -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Public Health Service expressed support (March 29) for voluntary measures by the livestock industry to ensure that the U.S. remains free of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). USDA has been monitoring for BSE for ten years and has never identified a single case. In addition, no beef from England has been imported into the U.S. since at least 1985. The measures announced will provide an additional level of assurance that the U.S. remains free of BSE. Both agencies stressed that these measures are designed to provide the American public the assurance that the U.S. food supply remains among the safest in the world. This industry announcement includes a voluntary program to ensure that ruminant products are not used in ruminant feed. Ruminant animals include cattle, sheep and goats. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control emphasized that since they began monitoring Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease mortality data, the number of cases in the U.S. has remained stable at about one case per million per year since 1979. **Contact:** Will Hueston (301) 734-8093.

CROP DESTRUCTION FOR KARNAL BUNT ANNOUNCED -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced (April 1) crop destruction orders for farming operations infected with Karnal bunt in New Mexico and Texas, approximately 4,000 acres. Farming operations that comply with the emergency action order and plow their wheat crops down may be eligible to receive compensation. USDA will use the funding available under the declaration of emergency, which Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced (March 28), to compensate producers. USDA's Chief Economist Office has determined that compensation for crop destruction in New Mexico and Texas would be appropriate at a rate of \$275 an acre plus \$25 an acre for plowing. Producers who receive compensation under the declaration of emergency may not be eligible for crop insurance indemnity. **Contact: Beth Hulse (301) 734-7280.**

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO RECEIVE EXTRA DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS -- Corn and sorghum producers who used the 0-85/92 provisions of the 1995 feed grain and price support acreage reduction program will receive approximately \$27 million in additional deficiency payments, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced (April 1). The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, requires that deficiency payments be made when either the national weighted average market prices received by producers during the first five months of the marketing year (September 1995 through January 1996) plus seven cents or the projected 12-month average market price is below the established target price. Because the adjusted five-month prices and the projected 12-month average farm prices for corn and sorghum are above the target price established for each crop, no regular deficiency payments are due producers at this time. However, participants in the 1995 corn and sorghum program who used the 0-85/92 provisions are guaranteed minimum payment rates of 40 cents per bushel for corn and 39 cents per bushel for sorghum, which were the estimated final deficiency payment rates for these crops when producers enrolled in the program. **Contact: Phil Sronce (202) 720-4417.**

USDA TARGETS MARKETS UNDER EEP AND DEIP -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced (April 1) a three-month continuation of the interim allocations under the 1995/1996 Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP) for the period April through June. During the interim period, procedures for EEP and DEIP are similar to the previous programs. Export sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses by the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). While recent program activity has been limited, USDA will continue to monitor the prices and actions of competitors, and fully intends to use the EEP and DEIP as appropriate. Details of the program, including invitations for offers, will be issued in the future. **Contact: Lynn Goldsbrough (202) 720-3930.**

INCREASE IN FY '96 TARIFF-RATE QUOTA FOR RAW-CANE SUGAR -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced (April 1) that the fiscal year 1996 tariff-rate quota (TRQ) for raw-cane sugar has been increased by 200,000 metric tons (220,462 short tons). The fiscal year 1996 TRQ level is therefore set at 2,017,195 metric tons (2,223,577 short tons). Country allocations of the increased TRQ will be announced by the U.S. Trade Representative. The Department will continue monitoring import requirements and will take necessary action to assure sufficient sugar supplies in the domestic market. TRQ adjustments will be made based on the most reliable supply and use information available. USDA is also monitoring the export intentions of foreign suppliers and will take action in conjunction with the U.S. Trade Representative, including reallocation if necessary, to facilitate the timely arrival of TRQ allocations. **Contact: Lynn K. Goldsbrough (202) 720-3930.**

EDITED BY LESLIE PARKER

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #2027 -- It's called BSE or "mad cow" disease, and it has caused a panic in Great Britain. What is this disease and what is the latest scientific information available on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Brenda Curtis covers the subject. (**Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary**).

CONSUMER TIME #1505 -- The new Farm Bill and consumers. The Healthy Eating Index. BSE Update. Sports and eating disorders. Gaining weight can be part of old age for some men. (**Weekly cassette -- consumer features**).

AGRITAPE #2018 -- 1996 farm payments and sign-up. What are farmers planting? U.S. livestock industry places voluntary ban on certain types of feed. Pork expansion slowing down. New Farm Bill--new farming philosophy. (**Weekly cassette -- news features**).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Friday, April 12, feed outlook, oil crops outlook, rice outlook, wheat outlook, hog outlook, world agricultural production, grains: world markets and trade, oilseeds: world markets and trade. Tuesday, April 16, weekly weather and crop outlook. Friday, April 19, agricultural outlook. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on how the 1996 Farm Bill will affect farmers and nonfarmers. Eric Parsons reports on the new Farm Program in the Farm Bill.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman highlights provisions of the new Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. USDA Chief Economist Keith Collins and Farm Services Agency Administrator Grant Buntrock make additional comments on the new Farm Bill.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS: Thursdays from 3:45 to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 402R (located at 89 degrees West), Transponder 13, Vertical Polarity, Downlink Frequency 3960 MHz.

****Note: Effective May 2-September 26, the satellite newsfeed coordinates will change to: Telstar 401(97 degrees West), Transponder 7, Vertical Polarity, Downlink Frequency 3840 MHz.**

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202)720-6072, or write to: Room 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300. Internet E-mail: LQuinn@USDA.GOV.

OFF MIKE

CHERRY BLOSSOMS...and 70 degree temperatures have arrived in Washington, D.C. this week. The blossoms and holiday week have brought many out-of-town visitors to the Nation's capital. Members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) are coming here April 20-23 for their annual "Washington Watch" conference. We're looking forward to welcoming participants at USDA on Monday, April 22, starting with a morning reception in our Video, Teleconference and Radio Center.

PLANTING TIME...is nearing for many crops. **John Everly** (KDTH, Dubuque, IA) says they need some rain to chase away residual ground frost because soil temperatures are still cool. He says river terminals in his area have been doing a brisk business with strong demand for U.S. grains. Not many farmers have "old crop" corn left since a high percentage of grain grown in John's region is fed locally to livestock. Alfalfa also is a major crop with harvesting usually done in early May. John begins his seventh year as farm broadcaster for KDTH next week. His radio career began in 1982, and for the past 10 years he has worked in farm broadcasting.

COTTON...planting intentions are lower this year, reports **Dave Black** (WMC, Memphis, TN), but early indicators point to a better than average yield. Boll weevils have not overwintered to the extent they did last year. Because of the improved prospects, some farmers who were going to try corn this year may be switching back. Dave says a good rule for cotton planting time is after five consecutive days of 60 degree soil temperature, which usually falls around April 15. Corn planting in his region has already been done, but some farmers are having to re-plant. Next year will be Dave's 40th year with WMC. He prepares four broadcasts throughout the day, Monday-Friday, and hosts a "Sunrise" program on Sunday mornings where he uses features from our weekly radio cassette service. Dave uses humor and character voices to liven his broadcasts.

FARM BILL...information is now available from USDA's Home Page on the Internet. Watch for details of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. You can access the home page at this address: <http://www.usda.gov>. This letter is there, too.

Larry A. Quinn
LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

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